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ABSTRACT

This two-part curriculum unit includes 20 slides depicting Days of the Dead in Mexico and the United States. The unit is designed to help middle school students compare customs and practices associated with death throughout the world in a way that promotes understanding of the values and needs that produce and are reinforced by death rituals and burial customs. The lesson structure provides a setting for students to express and understand their own needs and feelings regarding death customs in the context of a universal human experience. In "Part One: Views on Death," activities are designed to increase student knowledge of death and burial customs, form and evaluate generalizations about the purposes and various functions of death-related practices, and examine attitudes toward death as evidence of what people value in life. "Part Two: Days of the Dead - Dias de Los Muertos" encourages students to examine Mexican, and other cultural attitudes toward death. The Days of the Dead celebrate death in an open joyous, festive way. These interdisciplinary lessons employ art making experiences, food preparation, language arts activities, and field trip experiences to facilitate student understanding of this celebratory cultural expression. Each section provides a bibliography for further research. Reproducible student handouts are provided. (MM)

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ED 405 252

Death: A Part of Life

George G. Otero
and
Zoanne Harris

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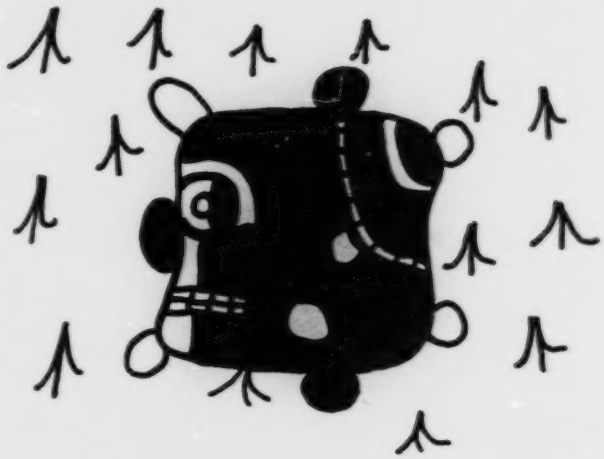

Death: A Part of Life

George G. Otero and Zoanne Harris

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TEACHER'S INTRODUCTION

PART ONE: VIEWS ON DEATH

Much of what we believe and do in life is remembered, symbolized, and honored in the customs with which we bury the dead. Burial practices are common to all people. A comparative study of these practices and customs will give students a greater understanding of those commonalities among people who may be culturally diverse, thereby increasing the students' development of a global perspective.

But why look at those customs associated with death? In addition to what burial customs tell us about what is significant to those who are alive, a study of death customs is important because of the subject's universality, tremendous inherent interest, and the lack of knowledge students have of these customs. By comparing various customs associated with death, students can better understand the values behind the customs surrounding the end of the life cycle.

In many ways death has taken the place of sex as the taboo subject in the curriculum. Students and parents often become emotionally involved in the burial or imminent death of a relative or friend. There is, therefore, a concern about how the subject will be handled. Will students develop new fears? Can the subject be studied objectively? Although many topics such as euthanasia, capital punishment, or the high cost of dying could be the focus of a unit on death, this unit is designed to help students learn to compare customs and practices associated with death throughout the world in a way that will promote the examination and evaluation of the values and needs that produce and are reinforced by burial customs. This structure will provide a setting for students to express and understand their own needs and feelings regarding death customs in the context of a universal human experience.

Students participating in the activities within this unit will increase their knowledge of death and burial customs, form and evaluate generalizations about the purposes and various functions of death-related practices, and examine attitudes toward death in order to better understand what people value in life. All of the activities have been developed so that a student will use comparative skills in completing the tasks. The comparative skills and sequence in which they are used in this unit are important. Students will collect, label, analyze, and then make generalizations concerning the relationship of death customs to the attitudes and needs of the living.

Students who complete the activities in this unit should become more competent in the following behaviors:

1. Identify and compare death customs around the world

2. Generalize how death customs reflect what is of importance to people and how those customs meet human needs

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3. Express verbally or in writing his or her own feelings and attitudes toward death and death practices

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SPECIAL NOTE TO TEACHERS

Some students may be emotionally involved in a recent or impending death. Hopefully this questionnaire and unit will allow them to discuss their feelings and questions in such a way that the entire class can learn from each other. For this to happen it is imperative that the teacher discuss with the class the immediacy and importance of this topic to some students so that a concerned and involved climate can be established for the study of death. Students should understand that what they say can have serious effects on other students, especially if remarks are made too jokingly. In some cases students will request to leave the class and they should be allowed to do so if they feel they simply cannot discuss the topic at this time.

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PART TWO: DAYS OF THE DEAD/LOS DIAS DE LOS MUERTOS

Los Dias de los Muertos, or the Days of the Dead, on November 1 and 2, is an annual national holiday in Mexico. This is a ritual time when the dead are expected to visit the living and are honored guests for the night. The holiday is celebrated in many different ways throughout Mexico and the Americas. It has its origins in ancient Indian ceremony.

The way families like to celebrate Los Dias de los Muertos is to visit the cemetery and the graves of family and friends who have died. During this special visit people come bearing offerings of panes de muertos (bread of the dead), flowers, food, drink, and often special toys to adorn the graves of loved ones. Important at this time is to clean and restore the graves, repaint and tend to details. Families often stay the entire day into the night, lighting candles in the cemetery.

For days before and after November 1 and 2, death is present everywhere in Mexico: in bakery windows where the special panes de muertos are made in animal and human form; and in the candy shops where wonderful sugar skull candies are prepared with their bright tinsel eyes and curly hair of frosting. Names can be painted in icing on a sugar skull. These are given to children and are exchanged by lovers and friends. Everyone wants his name on a sugar skull!

In many homes a ritual altar is prepared to honor the returning dead souls. The altars can be attractively adorned with the Zempasuchitl, a kind of marigold which is the traditional flower of the dead. There is incense and a candle to light the way for each returning dead soul. Food that the dead were fondest of in life is prepared. It is believed that the dead partake of the food in spirit; the living eat it afterward.

For children, delightful toys, usually skeletons made of papier mache and balsa wood, are created for Days of the Dead. These skulls and dancing skeletons are wonderfully amusing and often dressed with gay hats and funny boots. There are even cardboard coffins from which a skeleton, pulled by a string, can be made to jump. One can also see many kinds of masks, which are created especially for the day, decorated with paint and tinsel.

An amusing feature of the Days of the Dead in cities are the verses called "calaveras" printed on billboards and sold on the streets and in the market places. They are mocking and satirical, addressed to well-known persons in public life, such as the policemen. No one is spared from the good-natured fun. The following verses are the religious calaveras from 1925 when the priests refused to officiate because the government insisted that they register like ordinary citizens.

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Poor little priests
What work can they do now
Since their only profession
Was that of preaching
Our holy religion?

Well I don't know; anyway
I pity them truly,
Although to maintain themselves
They have something and more . . .
But ya son calaveras!

(The first meaning of calavera in Spanish is "skull," but it has others, such as "dead one." Many of the last verses end with ya son calaveras, "now they are dead ones.")

Because Mexico has set aside this ritual, a holdiay for the celebration and recognition of ancestors, it creates an opportunity for children to acquaint themselves with death. It certainly helps them to view death in a cultural framework: death is part of life.

It is important to note that Day of the Dead is not Halloween, for its origins and traditions are different. Today in Mexico, Day of the Dead is a tradition rapidly changing and being over-shadowed by Halloween. Day of the Dead is an ancient Indian ceremony that somehow evokes death as an intrinsic part of life.

Text adapted from: A Treasure of Mexican Folkways by Frances Toor, 1947.

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PART ONE: VIEWS ON DEATH

by

George G. Otero

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OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

1. WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?

   Students identify some of the things they fear using a checklist. Discussion centers around fear and death.

2. A QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT DEATH

   This questionnaire allows the students to identify some of their attitudes toward death and death customs. Students then discuss their attitudes with the other students.

3. FUNERAL NOTICES

   Students examine funeral notices in an American newspaper and identify the purpose of posting funeral notices. Then students compare funeral notices from newspapers around the world with the American notices noting similarities and differences.

4. CHARTING DEATH CUSTOMS

   Students read about death practices in Mexico, India, and China and categorize these customs using a set of questions about funeral practices. The students organize the answers to the questions in chart form so that the data can be compared and generalizations formulated about death customs.

5. GENERALIZING ABOUT DEATH CUSTOMS

   This activity has students form some generalizations about death customs based on the systematic data gathered on the chart. These generalizations are then compared to a list of generalizations provided in the unit. Students suggest ways in which they might test their generalizations.

6. TESTING, TESTING

   In this activity students test their generalizations by checking them with generalizations made by a professional anthropologist who has examined other cultures.

7. AMERICAN CHECK LIST

   This activity will allow students to draw on their own experiences and knowledge to compile a list of American funeral customs for comparison with the practices of other cultures and with the generalizations that the students are exploring.

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8. APPLYING THE GENERALIZATIONS

In this set of activities students explore music, poetry, graveyards, and kamikaze letters to see how people express their feelings about death in different modes. Students examine the relationship between death customs and the ways people live their lives. Students will take a field trip to a cemetery to gather data for examination and analysis. Throughout these activities students determine to what degree their generalizations apply to the situations they study.

9. EULOGY FOR MANKIND

In this activity students are asked to write a eulogy for mankind. Here the focus is on the fact that death is a part of life and that eulogies help us focus on the life of the dead person and what it means to the survivors.

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Title: WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?

Introduction:

Fear is an emotion that all students must deal with. This activity introduces students to the many kinds of events, places, and objects that people fear. After completing the activity, students will study one aspect of life that many people fear: the unknown world of death.

Objectives:

To examine some personal fears

To discuss some of the reasons for certain fears

To note the frequency of times that people choose fears that relate to death

Time: One class period

Materials: Handout #1, "A Checklist of Fears"

Procedure:

1. Hand out the "Checklist of Fears." Have students check those items they are afraid of. Point out that we all have fears and there is nothing wrong with being afraid about some things.

   Treat this checklist lightly. Students will enjoy measuring themselves against the long list of fears, but they should not be pushed to reveal information about their own fears.

2. Have students explain why they have certain fears. When and how did they develop this fear? How could they overcome the fear?

3. Have the students circle the fears listed that relate to death in some way. Ask them to note how many of the items they checked are related to death. Ask the students: "Why do people fear death?" (Fear of the unknown is basic, fear of a horrible death, fear of loss, etc.) Ask the students if any of the other things they fear are associated with the possibility of death (e.g., a fear of heights might be more closely associated with dying than with the height itself). Mention that many people have come to understand their attitudes toward death and the customs that help people deal with death. In the next few days the class will be examining death

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customs around the world, especially as they relate to burial, with the intention of understanding how people deal with this part of life.

Further Suggestions:

1. Have the students ask five other people in the community to look at the checklist and tell you which of the things on the list they are afraid of. Which fears are mentioned most often by children? adults? older persons?

2. We all have a nightmare now and then. Most of the students are afraid of nightmares. Write a nightmarish story, poem, or play, or express a nightmare feeling in a collage.

3. Interview a parent who has at least one child under the age of six. Find out what the child is afraid of, when the child first became afraid, and what the parent is doing to help overcome the child's fears. What do you think are the most common fears of young children? How will you raise your children so that they will not have these fears.

4. Interview people finding their answers to these questions: "Do you fear death?" "If so, why?" "If not, why not?" Report the results to the class.

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Title: A QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT DEATH

Introduction:

It is important that students identify and discuss their views and attitudes toward death customs. The purpose of the following questionnaire is to get students to express their beliefs and to begin comparing their attitudes and feelings with those of other students.

Objectives:

To identify students' views and attitudes about death customs

To compare the views in the class

Time: One class period

Materials: Handout #2, "A Questionnaire about Death"

Procedure:

1. Introduce the topic to the students: "For the next few days we will be studying funeral practices around the world, but first I would like us to examine our own opinions and attitudes about death."

2. Hand out the questionnaire to the students. "Please complete the following questionnaire on death customs. There are no right or wrong answers and this is not a test. You will not receive a grade. You may pick more than one answer for a question. We will discuss the questions after you have completed the questionnaire."

3. In the discussion that follows the completion of the survey, students should be encouraged to share with each other their values related to death customs and burial practices--whether this is expressed through religious belief, personal ideas and/or personal experience. Discussion may gravitate to any aspect of burial practices including wills, causes of death, mortuary practices, and so on. No one should be made to feel that his response is inadequate. The intent here is to impress upon the students that they have strong views about death customs and these views reveal outlooks about life and how it should be lived.

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Follow-up:

The questions below can be used to facilitate open discussion.

1. What do you think has influenced your views about death the most? (Your religion? Your own experiences? TV? Your friends?)

2. Which question did you find the most difficult to answer? Why?

3. Why did you choose the method of burial that you did?

4. For which questions would you be interested in knowing how other students responded? (Take a voluntary tally on these questions.)

5. Have you ever given much thought to your views of death and burial customs? Why?

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Title: FUNERAL NOTICES

Introduction:

During the discussion of the previous questionnaire students will raise many questions about the reasons behind certain practices related to death. They will also disagree about the meaning and purpose of different customs. By looking at the funeral practices of other cultures, the students can see their practices and beliefs in comparison.

When someone is trying to decide whether he is tall or short, he must decide by comparing to some standard. The next activity is designed to help students categorize death customs--in this case, the custom of posting funeral notices is analyzed.

Objectives:

To list the reasons for putting funeral notices in newspapers

To compare funeral notices from the United States with notices from papers in other nations

Time: One class period or less

Materials: Handout #3, "Obituaries from other Countries"
Funeral notices from a local newspaper

Procedures:

1. Make a transparency or copies of the funeral notices from a local newspaper. Hand out duplicated copies of the notices if you made them.

2. Ask the students to look at and read the notices. Ask the students what the possible reason would be for placing funeral notices in the newspaper. List the responses on the board. (The students will mention things such as advertising, invitation to funeral, remembrance, and public information as some of the functions of the notices.)

3. Pass out copies of Handout #3, "Obituaries from Other Countries," or make another transparency. Use the following questions in discussing the similarities and differences in the purpose and format of funeral notices throughout the world.

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a. In what ways do all the notices seem to serve the same purpose? Circle the items listed on the board that are similar to the purpose of the new notices. Add new categories that arise from looking at the new notices.

b. What are some of the differences between the notices. List these on the board. Refer both to the world notices and the local notices.

c. What possible explanations can you give to account for some of these differences?

d. All of these notices are in public newspapers. What does that tell you in general about placing funeral notices in the paper? (Students should mention the need to communicate to others about a death.)

e. What other means could a society use to inform people of deaths if there are not any newspapers? (Word of mouth, messengers, certain ceremonies, etc.)

f. Why might you expect to find funeral notices in most papers around the world. (The need to communicate about death is very great with all humans and they would use convenient ways to do so.)

Further Suggestions:

Funeral notices or obituaries often mention in a very few words what it is that should be remembered about the dead person. Using the home newspaper or the class handout, the teacher might have the students write their own obituary in less than 100 words. The teacher should emphasize that the purpose here is to get the students to think of those aspects of life that they would like to be remembered for. Is it their job, family, place of birth, or other items they would like to see in their obituary? The obituary may be make-believe or it can assume that the student has just died. The assignment should be optional, and any class reading should depend on student consent. Students might also be interested in writing a will, which again reflects what the person values before he dies. Encourage students to look at a real will, making theirs as realistic as possible, including signatures of witnesses and legal jargon. Both of these activities will help students see the relationship between funeral customs and the values of the people living in the society.

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Title: CHARTING DEATH CUSTOMS

Introduction:

Are death practices around the world different? In what ways are the funeral customs of various cultures similar? How can we study or examine these differences or similarities. What do these customs tell us about the people who practice these customs. We can answer these questions by studying the customs and beliefs comparatively in a systematic way. Then we will examine the reasons and possible explanations for these customs. The following exercise asks students to organize data in a fashion for further analysis.

Objectives:

To fill in a chart on death customs from three countries

To learn about the death customs of three other cultures

To analyze data about death customs in a systematic way

Time: Two class periods

Materials: Handout #4, "Death in Lin Ling"
Handout #5, "Mexican Death Practices"
Handout #6, "India: Hindu Funeral Customs"
Handout #7, "Questionnaire"
Handout #8, "Chart"

Procedure:

1. Have students form groups of two or three. Pass out the three readings from the three cultures. One student can be responsible for one reading. Pass out the questions and the chart.

2. Tell the students to read over the questions and pick eight that they would like to investigate. Put the number of the question in the far left hand column of the chart. Read the readings and fill in the chart answering the questions for each culture in the appropriate column. Remember, there may not be an answer to each question for every culture.

3. Give some examples of how the chart should be filled out. (For example, in answering the question, "In what ways do the survivors show their grief or sense of loss?", students might list weeping,

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wearing white cloth, and talking about the dead person, etc., under Mexico.) You might have the class fill in one question together as a sample because of the importance of collecting the information correctly and accurately in this exercise. NOTE: Students may set up some of their own questions in addition to the ones on the question sheet.

4. Once students have labeled the customs of the three case studies according to the function or purpose of the practice, the class can then note similarities and differences within each category. There may be similarities or differences in specific practices, time elements, degree of practice, and so on. Students who say they could not find out the answers to questions may find that others could. The purpose here is to get the students to verbalize what they have categorized. They must understand the data and the questions before attempting to make generalizations about death customs. (Have students save chart for next activity.)

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Title: GENERALIZING ABOUT DEATH CUSTOMS

Introduction:

This activity will help students form some generalizations about death customs based on the systematic data gathered on the chart. These generalizations will be concerned with what death customs tell us about the needs and values of the living.

Objectives:

To make general statements about death customs and related practices

To make general statements about the function of death customs for those who are still alive

To analyze the data students have collected

Time: Two class periods

Materials: Handout #8, "Chart"
Handout #9, "Generalized Statements"

Procedure:

1. With the charts the students compiled in the previous activity, use the questions listed below to have students analyze the data charted. As students are discussing the questions, they will be making generalized statements about death customs and human attitudes toward death as well as generalized statements about the values and needs of the people who practice these customs. List the students' statements on the board. (Examples of the kinds of statements that should be recorded are: most cultures formally dispose of the body; most cultures have a religious service for the dead person; death costumes are special costumes worn only at burials.) Ten or fifteen generalizations are enough. Some questions on making generalizations might be:

   a. For which areas were the cultures most similar? What explanation can you give for these similarities?

   b. For which areas were the cultures very different? What explanation can you give for these differences?

   c. What needs do people seem to have when a person dies?

   d. What are the purposes of the ceremonies before the burial or cremation of the body?

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e. Why do customs that serve the same function differ in many other ways?

2. Distribute Handout #9, "Generalized Statements." Ask students to identify those statements that are similar to the statements on the board. Circle those on the handout. Ask students if they think the other statements are true based on the information they have on their charts. If not, cross them out.

3. Point out that the students now have a list of general statements about the burial customs that might be true for most cultures in the world. Tell them that the next activity has them decide how they would collect more information to test the truth of the statements.

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Title: TESTING, TESTING

Introduction:

In what ways can students try to verify the generalizations they have on their lists? They might check with scholars who have studied death; they might interview persons from other cultures; they might read or view films. This activity exposes the students to more information with which to test the generalizations and points out that testing our general statements is a continuing process.

Objectives:

To read the generalizations of a noted anthropologist about death customs

To apply what they have read to the statements they have listed to see if the new information supports or contradicts the statements on their lists

Time: One class period

Materials:

None needed, unless instructor duplicates pages from Understanding Other Cultures as indicated below.

Procedure:

1. Ask students to suggest where and how they might get more information in order to test the validity of the statements they have on their lists. (They will list books, speakers, interviews, professors, films, etc.)

2. Tell the students you are going to read them an article by someone who has studied other cultures much of her life (or duplicate appropriate pages from the book for students). Obtain a copy of Ina Corinne Brown's book, Understanding Other Cultures (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963). Read to students the selection on pages 60-62 entitled "When People Die." Or these pages can be duplicated for the class. Ask the students to mention any statements from the reading that might apply to items on their lists.

   Ask the students to mention statements on their list that the article tends to support. Are there any statements that the article tends not to support? Place a question mark next to these statements.

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3. Mention to the students that this process of gathering data and evaluating our generalizations goes on as students continue to collect more information about burial customs. They will have the opportunity to test these generalizations in some of the activities that follow in this unit. At the end of the unit, the class should examine their lists to see what general statements they feel they can make about death customs around the world.

Further Suggestions:

Have students bring to class readings that deal with death and burial customs utilizing a cross-cultural perspective.

You might let small groups of interested students collect information on their own against which they can test their generalizations. They should try to identify customs from other cultures besides the three studied.

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Title: AMERICAN CHECK LIST

Introduction:

During the activities students will often make reference to and ask questions about American customs and practices. You may discuss these questions since students are primarily interested in their own attitudes and values. This activity will allow students to draw on their own experiences and knowledge to compile a list of American funeral customs for comparison with the practices of other cultures and with the generalizations that the students are exploring.

Teachers should note that a class with different religious and ethnic backgrounds will come up with diverse lists. This is important to keep in mind. Students should recognize that different cultures have different ways of meeting the same needs.

Objectives:

To learn about the customs and practices of other students in their class as related to funeral customs

To compare a list of funeral practices in America with the generalizations they are testing

Time: One class period

Materials: Handout #9, "Generalized Statements"

Procedure:

1. Have students get together in groups of two or three. Tell them to make a list of all the practices and customs they can think of that Americans have regarding the dead. This list should cover the time from a person's death to the time the body is finally disposed of. We have studied two of these practices already. One is the funeral notice, and the other is the obituary. There are many you can list. Keep in mind your own experiences. Your group's list will probably be similar in some ways and different in other ways from the lists of the other groups' because your knowledge and experiences are different.

2. The students should then compare these lists of practices with Handout #9. Have them use these questions to do the comparing. You might write them on the board.

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a. Which generalizations explain which practices?

b. Which generalizations seem to be contrary to the practices of many Americans?

c. Which practices are outdated, in your opinion?

d. What changes should be made?

e. What are some of the similarities and differences between American and other nations' death customs?

f. What would account for or explain the differences? The similarities?

Evaluation:

Question "f" above is the most important. Have the students write a short essay explaining similarities and differences in death customs around the world.

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Title: APPLYING THE GENERALIZATIONS

Introduction:

This section is intended to help students see that they will be able to continually evaluate and form new generalizations about death practices. They should always be collecting new data, whether this is in the form of a book, a film, death symbols, eulogies, records, or poems. The following activities are good examples of how further study can be accomplished so that students are applying and expanding what they have learned so far. These activities will serve as methods for evaluation. Students should be able to explain the customs they observe, evaluate them in light of the generalizations made before, and discuss the relationship between the data and the needs or values of the living. In many of the suggestions, students are looking at data from many cultures, but in each activity they are looking at the material comparatively and they should be able to note similarities and differences.

Objectives:

To visit a cemetery and collect evidence from gravestones

To demonstrate their ability to analyze information about death customs

To explore literary forms of expressing views on death

To explore the views persons have when facing death during war time

To explore music that deals with death

To evaluate information on death in light of the generalizations made before

Time: Two class periods for the gravestone rubbings
One class period for the poems
One class period for the records
One class period for the kamikaze letters

Materials: Newsprint and crayons for the gravestone rubbings
Poems on death
Songs about death
Handout #10, "Kamikaze Letters"

Procedure: Gravestone Rubbings

Collect from a graveyard some rubbings of the gravestones. This would make an excellent field trip activity, or you may want to collect some

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and bring them to class. It is suggested that you take the trip early in the unit--by the time you finally look at the rubbings, students may see that they now can evaluate them and apply the generalizations they have made. You make the rubbing by placing newsprint over the stone and rubbing or coloring the entire paper with a crayon or charcoal. Everything on the page will then be darkened except for the inscription on the stone.

Display these rubbings around the room. Ask students to suggest what Americans consider to be important in life by what they say on the gravestones. Students should consider what is implied by the size of the stone; its location and composition as well. All this data could be collected at the cemetery. Ask the students in what ways the gravestones and the information on them meet the needs of people. Following are some questions:

1. What are the people on the gravestones remembered for?

2. What would you like to be remembered for? What words or pictures would you like placed on your gravestone?

3. What do the words and pictures on the gravestones tell you about the values that are important to Americans?

4. What can you say about American values from the size, shape, and material of the gravestones?

5. What are the other ways Americans are choosing to be buried as well as in a cemetery with a gravestone? Why do you think that some Americans feel it important to change the method of disposing of their bodies?

Students will come up with many answers. The family is very important. Birth date and age are also important. We value military service. Many Americans believe strongly in an afterlife. Here you might again have students make a gravestone heading for themselves that would reflect their own values.

Procedure: Poems about Death

But we can also compare specific practices or expressions of death attitudes as we did with death customs when examining funeral notices. Again, this is another example to help impress upon the students that their generalizations are tentative, that evaluation is a constant, never-ending process. But here students will also be learning how various people think life should be lived as reflected in their attitudes toward death. Have students find poems about death and answer and discuss the following questions for each poem.

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1. What was the poet's attitude toward death?
2. What was the poem trying to say?
3. Did you feel the poem said more about life than death?
4. Why do many peoms deal with the topic of death?
5. Did any of the poems help reinforce or support any of the generalizations you have made?

Procedure: Songs about Death

Another method for examining attitudes toward death that reflect the values of the living is the use of songs. Have the students bring in a record, modern or classical, folk or spiritual, that they think deals with death. Below are some excellent examples that you might want to use to introduce the assignment. Listen to the records, having students write down what the song is saying about death. Then answer and discuss the questions for poems, applying them this time to the records.

> Cat Stevens, "But I Might Die Tonight," from the album Tea for the Tillerman; "And When I Die," from the album Blood, Sweat and Tears; Peter, Paul, and Mary, "Weep for Jamie," from Peter, Paul and Mary album 1700.
>
> Negro spirituals such as "Deep River," and "Jump Down." Brook Benton, "Deep River" from If You Believe Brook Benton. Many Negro spirituals deal with death and there are many sources for their songs. There are also many current popular songs that deal with death perspectives.

Procedure: Kamikaze Letters

Have the students read these letters. Then have the class discuss the following questions:

1. What was the situation under which the men were giving their lives?

2. What things about life did they mention that they would miss when dead?

3. What were their feelings about dying for their country? Do you think Americans have sometimes used the same explanations? For example, in the Vietnam War?

4. What evidence is there in the letter about Japanese values that would help explain how one could go on a suicide mission?

5. From your experience with American war stories, what would you say motivated men to go on impossible missions or tasks? How are the Japanese similar and different in this respect?

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6. Under what circumstances would you not be willing to die for your country? Explain.

Other Sources:

Students might want to collect additional data to test their generalizations and discover different attitudes. Sources might be death symbols, eulogies, and speakers such as funeral directors, religious leaders, hospital personnel, etc.

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Title: EULOGY FOR MANKIND

Introduction:

The future of mankind is in question. Many people today think that men and women with the current values and attitudes will not exist in the future. Humans may exist, but they will be different in significant ways from humans today. Although this may be more science fiction than scientific potential, this exercise encourages students to examine both the good and the bad traits of mankind. The setting for the activity is the death of human beings as we have known them. The student is asked to write a eulogy for the deceased. Before doing this, students are exposed to two eulogies for famous men of the past.

Objectives:

To understand the purpose of a eulogy

To write a eulogy about mankind which reflects the students' views about human beings and their faults and strengths

Time: Two class periods

Materials: Handout #11, "Eulogy for Humankind"
Handout #12, "Mike Mansfield: Eulogy for John F. Kennedy"

Procedure:

1. Read to students the hypothetical situation that has just occurred. tell them that they are the only survivors and have been asked to write eulogies for humankind. Ask students what a eulogy is and what it should include. Many will not know.

2. Read or have the students read the eulogy to John Kennedy. After reading the eulogy, have students mention the characteristics of a eulogy. These include:

   a. mention of good points of person
   b. mention of accomplishments
   c. a focus on living person's grief and concern
   d. mention of what person taught the living
   e. use of metaphors and allegories
   f. serious style
   g. mention where we go from here, what do we do now
   h. some specific reference to cause of death

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3. Have the students write their eulogy.

NOTE: Students may have trouble getting started; if so, encourage them to write anything, maybe some key words that would make good metaphors. You could also have students list all good remembrances they have about humans.

Students may feel there are no good things to say--mention that a killer would still be eulogised as a victim of fate or a person who at least tried.

Another variation of this exercise might be on a science fiction level. Have students write the eulogy for mankind as if they were another form of life that had contact with these humans before they became extinct.

4. Have students read their eulogy to the class. Which ones were the best? Have the class establish criteria.

5. Have the students discuss the following questions:

   a. Is the human race headed for a disaster?
   b. What is your opinion about the world's future?
   c. What can be done to make sure that the good traits of humans are utilized more?
   d. How would you feel about the end of man as we know him?

Discuss with students those qualities or traits of humans that must be developed and encouraged so that people can work jointly on our present problems and avoid the disasters that could occur if present trends continue unabated. The object here is to focus on those qualities in people that are necessary for survival of people in the Global Village.

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Suggested Further Activities on Death:

1. List the following sayings about death on the board. Discuss their meaning by giving examples of how they are used. How do these sayings reflect American attitudes toward death?

   a. the end is near
   b. I wish I were dead
   c. scared to death
   d. kicked the bucket
   e. never say die

2. Watch a TV show or movie where someone dies. That should not be difficult to do. In fact, the assignment might be to list how many shows involve the death of at least one person. Answer the following questions about the show.

   a. How were the people affected?
   b. What did they do?
   c. What funeral practices were shown?
   d. Was it a violent death?
   e. What are your reactions to seeing so many deaths on TV?

3. Discuss possible explanations for the following statement: In Guatemala, a man has a life expectancy of fifty-two years; in the United States, a man can expect to live for seventy-two years. Do you think the life style of people in a culture is affected by average life expectancy? What is being done to increase life expectancy? Do you feel people should act as though they will live to be seventy-two years old?

4. Topics and questions for further research and discussion:

   a. Are there good ways and bad ways to die?
   b. Does making life longer necessarily make it any better?
   c. How serious is the possibility of global death from atomic warfare or the collapse of the ecosystem?
   d. Do people have a right to cause their own death (suicide) or the death of another?
   e. What explanations have men given for why men die?
   f. What are the major causes of death for young people from ages twelve to eighteen? How do these causes affect the attitudes that young people have toward death?

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VIEWS ON DEATH

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Equinox Institute
260 Tremont Street
Boston, MA

Foundation of Thanatology
630 West 168 Street
New York, NY 10038

National Funeral Directors Association
135 West Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Center for Death Education and Research
Robert Fulton, Director
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455

American Association of Suicidology
Department of Health
2151 Berkeley Way
Berkeley, CA 94704

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Perspectives on Death. A Thematic Teaching Unit. Post Office Box 213, Dekalb, IL 60115. Unit contains Audio-Visual package with an excellent filmstrip on funeral customs around the world. There is also a student anthology which goes into depth on American customs and attitudes toward death. This would be an excellent teacher resource. Write to the above address for more information.

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PART TWO: DAYS OF THE DEAD--DIAS DE LOS MUERTOS

by

Zoanne Harris

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WHY TEACH OUR CHILDREN ABOUT DAYS OF THE DEAD IN MEXICO?

In our North American Anglo culture we usually squirm and feel uncomfortable at the sight of skeletons, the thought of death, or the passing of a funeral procession. We speak about death in euphemisms to ourselves and to our children--"he passed on," "she passed away," "her passing was unexpected," "he expired," etc. Death to us is somber, its color is black. We usually do not sing or dance or eat in the presence of the dead. Burial is seen as a final act; the dead person no longer exists for us and we do not encourage visits from their spirits.

In contrast, the Mexicans (and many other cultures) celebrate death in an open and joyous way. Spirits are encouraged to visit and to stay in touch with family and friends. This is a completely different attitude toward death that both children and adults can share. Our students can gain a wider understanding of cultural values by being exposed to these different attitudes toward death.

In the Spanish-speaking community of San Francisco, we have been celebrating the Mexican Days of the Dead for several years. Many of the Latino cultural organizations present programs on Dias de los Muertos for both adults and children. These programs usually involve community artists and musicians, teachers and students, and local merchants, including the panaderias where traditional breads of the dead are baked.

If children can learn about different ways of looking at death, they may be more open to and tolerant of other cultures and be better informed about our complex multicultural society. By participating communally in the following activities of Days of the Dead, the children and teachers will directly experience this new concept of death and share a meaningful experience with each other.

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OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

1. INTRODUCTION TO DAYS OF THE DEAD THROUGH SLIDES

   Students discuss and view a series of twenty slides depicting Days of the Dead in Mexico and the U.S. Following this, students sequence slides in proper order to understand the overall sequence of the festival. This sequencing may be done with the actual slides or with student-made drawings.

2. CREATING A COMMUNAL ALTAR FOR DAYS OF THE DEAD

   This is a participatory activity in which students learn to cooperate together in creating an altar for the dead. It provides an opportunity for students to use creatively the information they have learned about this ceremony.

3. MAKING BREAD OF THE DEAD AND MEXICAN HOT CHOCOLATE

   This is a participatory activity in which students learn to cooperate together in sharing the making of bread and hot chocolate. They can lean the traditional Mexican chant in Spanish which accompanies the beating of the chocolate to a frothy mixture. They also will experience the communal act of breaking bread together as they share the fruits of their labor.

4. MESSENGER KITES

   The students will make messenger kites out of tissue paper, string, and dowels. These kites are flown in the cemeteries on Days of the Dead in a small village in Guatemala.

5. DRAWING ACTIVITY

   This activity has students draw skeletons engaged in everyday activities. They can make cartoons by adding captions or balloon dialogues.

6. PRE-COLOMBIAN MYTHOLOGY

   Students can research and write about some of the ancient Pre-Colombian death myths and traditions. (For example, Coatlicue, Aztec goddess of Life and Death.)

7. FIELD TRIPS TO THE COMMUNITY

   In areas where Days of the Dead are being "recreated" (such as San Francisco and Los Angeles), students can go on field trips to local bakeries, museums, markets and galleries to see how the communities are celebrating.

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8. RESEARCH IN COMPARATIVE TRADITIONS

Students research and write about Halloween, All Souls and All Saints, Chinese death traditions, etc. After writing about them individually, the whole class can have a group discussion, comparing and contrasting these traditions.

9. SAYINGS ABOUT DEATH

Students read many different sayings about death from Mexico (when appropriate this can be done bilingually) and then write some of their own. This activity summarizes the Mexican attitude toward death. It is hoped that by the time the students complete this activity, they will have a better understanding of this different way of viewing death.

10. MAKING AN ANIMATED FILM OR FILMSTRIP

Students draw or paint their impressions of Days of the Dead and write a narration for a film or filmstrip.

11. WRITING STORIES

In this activity, students use their creative writing skills to write stories about their impressions of Days of the Dead. This might be an individual or cooperative project.

12. ART EXHIBIT

In this activity, students create their impressions of Days of the Dead in various media and then prepare a school site exhibit to share with other classes.

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Title: INTRODUCTION TO DAYS OF THE DEAD THROUGH SLIDES

Introduction:

These slides provide an historical perspective on the Days of the Dead in Mexico. They trace the theme from Pre-Colombian times to the present. They also reflect celebrations of Days of the Dead in San Francisco, California.

Objectives:

To acquaint students with the festival of Days of the Dead in Mexico

To give students a sense of the sequence of this festival

To introduce a new concept of death to the students

Time: One class period

Materials: Set of twenty slides included in this unit
Slide commentary
Slide projector and screen
Handouts and writing materials

Procedure:

1. Give introductory remarks about Days of the Dead.

2. Show slides and discuss them with students, encouraging questions and discussion. (See slide commentary for information on slides.)

3. The sequencing activity can be done in various ways, depending on the ages of the students. Select five to seven slides illustrating each of the five general areas of the slide commentary: Pre-Colombian, Contemporary Market Preparation in Mexico, Contemporary Mexican Folk Art, Altars, and Cemetery Celebrations.

4. Discuss with the students festivals that are familiar to them, such as Easter, Christmas, or local celebrations. The students should be encouraged to see the sequence in their own celebrations to help them sequence the Days of the Dead slides.

5. Keeping in mind the age and ability of the students, select the way in which they will sequence the slides. Following are some suggestions:

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a. Write up descriptions of the selected slides and put them in a handout. As each slide is shown, the students can number the corresponding description on the handout and thus sequence the series.

b. Draw pictures of each of the selected slides and put them on a handout. After the slides are shown, the students can cut up the pictures and paste them in order on another sheet of paper.

c. After viewing the selected slides, have students draw pictures of them and write descriptions in the proper sequence.

Further Suggestions:

You may want to project individual slides on the screen to see if the students can identify them.

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SLIDE COMMENTARY

These slides provide an historical perspective on the Days of the Dead in Mexico. They trace the theme of death from Pre-Colombian times to the present. They also reflect celebrations of Days of the Dead in San Francisco, California.

I. Pre-Colombian Depictions of Death

1. Mictlantechulti: Lord of the Region of Death. A gold pendent from the Mixtec culture, Mexico, eighth to eleventh century.

2. Dual Mask of Life and Death: sculptured head depicting life on one side of the face and death on the other. Zapotec culture, Monte Alban, Oaxaca, Mexico.

3. A page from the Borgia Codex depicting death figures, Mixteca-Puebla culture, Mexico.

4. Aztec funerary mask of jade and turquoise mosaics, Mexico.

II. Contemporary Mexico - Market Preparation for Days of the Dead

5. Special flowers for Days of the Dead, Toluca market, Mexico, 1975.

6. Bread of the Dead/Pan de los Muertos, Toluca market, Mexico, 1975.

7. Sugar skulls and animals, Toluca Market, Mexico, 1975.

8. Sugar animals, dolls, and caskets, Toluca Market, Mexico, 1975.

III. Contemporary Mexico - Folk Art for Days of the Dead

9. Painted clay candelabra with skeletons and flowers, Metepec, Mexico, on exhibit, Mexico City, 1975.

10. Painted papier-mache skeleton figures: The Milkman (El Lechero) and a group enjoying their feast in the cemetery (Gran Mole de Calaveras), on exhibit, Mexico City, 1975.

11. Painted papier-mache skeleton figure: The Snow Cone Vendor (El Raspadero), on exhibit, Mexico City.

12. Elaborately decorated sugar skull often given to one's sweetheart as a token of love, Mexico City. (Photo credit: Days of the Dead, San Diego Museum of Man.)

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IV. Altars for Days of the Dead

13. Family altar from the village of Mixquic, Mexico, 1975. Note squashes used as candleholders; bottle of liquor labeled with the name of the deceased; and offerings of fruit, bread of the dead, flowers, tamales, corn, incense and a clay dog to aid in guiding the spirits to heaven. Particular to this village is the tradition of placing on the altar slices of sugar cane put through the holes of round pink cookies called "golletes" (see edge of altar table).

14. Child's altar as part of a larger family altar. Note miniature toys and cookies as offerings. Mixquic, Mexico, 1975.

15. Family altar from village of Mixquic, Mexico, 1975. Note elaborately embroidered tablecloth and upside down broom. When asked why the broom was there, the woman of the house explained that it was the tradition of her parents.

16. Oaxaca-style altar created at Galeria de la Raza, San Francisco by Yolanda Garfias-Woo, community teacher and artist, 1976.

17. Spanish Bilingual classroom altar and display, Buena Vista School, San Francisco, 1974.

V. Cemetery Celebrations for Days of the Dead

18. Woman making sweet cakes to sell to families at the cemetery, Mixquic, Mexico, 1975. Note cakes cooking on the portable brazier.

19. Grave decorated with flowers, Mixquic, Mexico, 1975. Note smoke from burning incense.

20. Night scene in a cemetery: candles burning and people visiting graves, Venezuela.

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Title: CREATING A COMMUNAL ALTAR FOR DAYS OF THE DEAD

Introduction:

This is a participatory activity in which students learn to cooperate together in creating an altar for the dead. It provides an opportunity for students to use creatively the information they have learned about this ceremony. In the first part of this activity students divide into small groups to create various objects for the communal altar. In the second part of the activity students work cooperatively to create their own altar honoring the dead. They will use all of the objects that they created in the first part of this activity.

Objectives:

To follow directions and make prescribed objects

To make objects using individual imagination and creativity

To work cooperatively and creatively in the making of an altar

To make group decisions

Projects and Times:

a. A "Dia de Los Muertos" string puppet (one class period)

b. Flags and papercuts (one-two class periods)

c. Thumprint skeletons (one class period)

d. Skulls and toys (one-two class periods)

e. Skeleton cutout (one class period)

f. Paper flowers (one class period)

g. Straw or pipecleaner skeletons (one class period)

Procedure:

1. Select which projects to use, taking into consideration students' ages, interests, and abilities, and the time and materials available. (See detailed project descriptions following this page.)

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2. Set up basic altar structure (table, shelves, etc.).

3. Students construct one or several altars working together as one large group or several small groups.

4. After altars are completed, discuss them with students.

Further Suggestions:

For an optional independent activity, students might want to add their own creative ideas for altar offerings. These may include writing or gathering special objects that have meaning to them or the person they are remembering.

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a. A "Dia de Los Muertos" String Puppet

This puppet illustrates the sense of humor which is part of the Mexican attitude toward death. String puppets are a popular toy made during the Days of the Dead celebrations in Mexico. Some are hand carved of wood, but many are made of cardboard. By making the puppet, students can begin to internalize the idea of death as permeating all of our lives.

Materials: Handout #13, "Instructions"
Handout #14, "Pattern"
Posterboard
Small brads
Markers
Dowel
Fishing twine

Further Suggestions:

It is important for the teacher to recognize the common fearful reaction to skeltons. This activity is a way to present another view of skeletons and death.

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b. Flags and Papercuts

Flags and papercuts are used widely in Mexico as decorations for various fiestas and gatherings. Themes of skeletons and skulls are popular for Days of the Dead.

Materials: Multi-colored tissue paper
String
Scissors
Pencils
Thin wooden kabob skewers (cocktail size)

Procedure:

1. Show students examples of various kinds of papercuts (snowflakes) and flags, and encourage them to create their own designs on the theme of death.

2. Have students think through how they will plan their design for a papercut. They may want to draw it in pencil first.

3. Students cut out flags and papercuts. This may be done simply by folding the paper into fours and cutting it doily style.

4. Flags can be glued on wooden skewers or glued in a series on a string.

5. Place strings of flags above the altar or drape along the altar itself.

6. Also, flags on individual skewers can be stuck into pieces of fruit for decoration on the altar.

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c. Thumbprint Skeletons

These whimsical figures can be a very enjoyable project which provides a chance for the students to use their imaginations and express their humor. This activity helps the students understand the Mexican attitude toward death.

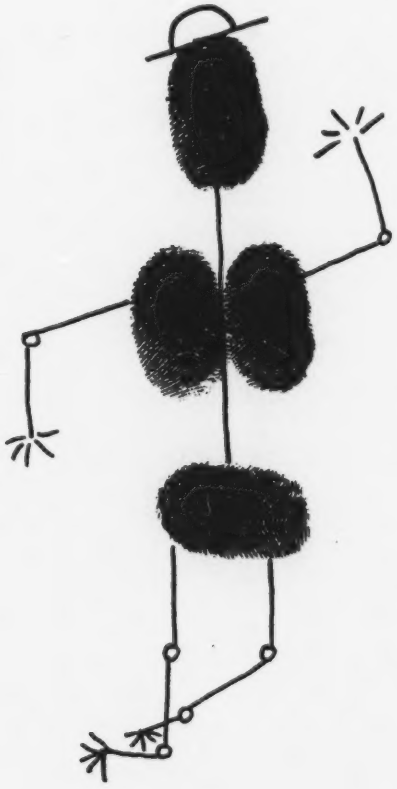
Materials: Paper
Ink pads
Pens or markers
Paper towels (to wipe hands)

Procedure:

1. Students design skeleton figures combining their fingerprints and line drawings.

2. Students can write captions for these and perhaps create a story to accompany them.

3. Post drawings on the wall around the altar.



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d. Making Skulls and Toys

This provides another opportunity for students to combine their creative ideas in making toys for the altar. Some suggestions for things to make are: skeletons and skulls engaged in various activities, caskets, animals, flowers and masks.

Materials: Cardboard
Paints
Clay
Papier mache (newspaper, paper towels, wheat paste)
Baker's clay (flour, water, salt)
Shellac (optional)

Procedure:

1. Have students choose the medium with which they will work.
2. Assist them with technical problems; students should use their own ideas to create their projects.
3. Discuss individual projects and place on altar.

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e. Skeleton Cut-Out

This toy is a fun three dimensional skeleton in a Mexican outfit. It can be mounted on a stick and used like a stick puppet.

Time: One-half to one class period

Materials: Handout #15, "Pattern"
Crayons or markers
Posterboard
Scissors
Glue
Cotton
Dowels (optional)

Procedure:

1. Have students color skeleton and clothing and cut them out.
2. Have students fold and assemble figure and glue on cotton for hair.
3. Mount skeleton on a stick (optional) and place on altar.

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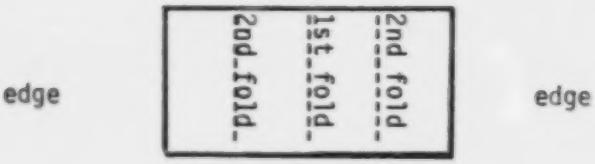
f. Paper Flowers

These paper flowers are used traditionally all over Mexico for various fiestas. They make nice decorations for Days of the Dead altars.

Materials: Colored tissue or crepe paper
Scissors
Pencils
Flower wire or twist ties

Procedure:

1. Cut off section of folded tissue or crepe paper about three to five inches wide.



2. Draw shape of flower petal on folded section.

3. Cut flower petals (leaving paper folded) being sure to cut only on the top open edge, leaving enough of the folded edges to keep all the petals connected (like cut out paper dolls in a line).

4. Hold the bottom straight edge in left hand while gathering the petals one by one with right hand, to bunch into one full flower.

5. Tie petals together in center with flower wire or twist tie and spread out petals.

Further Suggestions:

Students can create many different kinds of flowers by experimenting with petal shapes. These flowers can be clustered and used to decorate the altar or combined with strings of flags above the altar.

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g. Straw or Pipe Cleaner Skeletons

This activity encourages students to use their imaginations and create humorous skeleton poses.

Materials: Drinking straws or pipe cleaners
Scissors
Glue
Cardboard or paper
Cotton

Procedure:

1. Encourage students to create whimsical skeleton postures with the cut straws or pipe cleaners.
2. Students glue down designs on paper or cardboard and decorate with cotton or other materials.
3. Students may want to caption these or write a short story about them.
4. Place on altar.

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Title: MAKING BREAD OF THE DEAD AND MEXICAN HOT CHOCOLATE

Introduction:

This is a participatory activity in which students learn to cooperate in sharing the making of bread and hot chocolate. They can learn the traditional Mexican chant in Spanish which accompanies the beating of the chocolate to a frothy mixture. They also will experience the communal act of breaking bread as they share the fruits of labor.

Objectives:

To have students follow directions and make a prescribed product

To cooperate in a group project

To share in the eating of what they made together

Time: One class period for chocolate
Bread takes about 3½ to 4 hours

Materials:

Chocolate--Handout #16, "Chocolate"
Grater
Mexican chocolate sold in cakes or bars (Ibarra brand is good)
Milk
Large pot
Stove of hot plate
Molinillo (Mexican chocolate beater) or egg beater
Cups

Bread-- Handout #17, "Bread of the Dead"
Handout #18, "Bread That Lifts the Spirits"

Procedure: Chocolate

1. Distribute Handout #16.
2. Grate chocolate for easier dissolving in the milk.
3. Mix milk and chocolate and stir over low to medium flame.
4. When chocolate and milk have blended, beat to a froth with molinillo or egg beater, chanting "Chocolate" rhyme.
5. Serve warm.

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Procedure: Bread

1. Make bread at home unless facilities are available at school.
2. Allow time for sharing of hot chocolate and bread. This is nice to share around the altar.
3. Distribute Handout #18.

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Title: MESSENGER KITES

Introduction:

On November 1 of the Days of the Dead, these kites are flown in the cemeteries of the small village of Santiago Sacatepequez, Guatemala. The actual kites are quite large and often measure five yards across. It takes six to eight weeks to build a kite, and as many as ten men may work on one. These kites are made to last for a single afternoon and are considered messages for the dead or tokens for remembrance. When the kite is damaged beyond repair, its makers take off the paper and burn it, saving only the bamboo poles to use the next year.

Objective:

To learn another of the Days of the Dead traditions

Time: One to two class periods, or work at home

Materials: Handout #19, "Instructions"
4, 36-inch dowels (for one kite)
8, 30x20-inch pieces of colored tissue paper (for one kite)
String
White glue
Knife
Compass
Scissors
Posterboard
Pencil
Yardstick

Procedure:

Distribute Handout #19

Further Suggestions:

You may want to fly the kites in a simulated cemetery experience.

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Title: DRAWING ACTIVITY

Introduction:

In this activity students draw skeletons performing everyday activities. Students can make cartoons by adding captions or balloon dialogues.

Objectives:

To encourage creativity and wit

To encourage creative writing

Time: One class period

Materials: Paper
Crayons, markers or paints

Procedure:

1. Have students sketch out skeletons engaged in everyday activities.
2. Students draw and color final product.
3. Students may add captions or balloons to make cartoons.

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Title: PRE-COLOMBIAN MYTHOLOGY

Introduction:

Students can research and write about some of the ancient Pre-Colombian death myths and traditions. (For example, Coatlicue, Goddess of Life and Death in the Aztec culture.)

Objectives:

To sharpen research skills

To encourage curiosity

To provide a writing activity

Time: One to two class periods and/or homework

Materials: Paper
Pencils and Pens
Library books

Procedure:

1. Arrange a library visit or assign as homework. If students are unfamiliar with the card catalogue, give a lesson in how to use it for research.

2. Have students research mythology on death and write a report on their findings.

3. Discuss findings in class.

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Title: FIELD TRIPS TO THE COMMUNITY

Introduction:

In areas where Days of the Dead are being "recreated" (such as San Francisco and Los Angeles), students can go on field trips to local bakeries, museums, markets and galleries to see how the communities are celebrating.

Objectives:

To acquaint students with local community activities

To broaden understanding of the Muertos celebration

To increase exposure to the Muertos celebration

Time: One-half to one day

Materials: Notebooks or sketchbooks
Pencils

Procedure:

1. Visit local sites with Days of the Dead exhibits or stores selling Muertos preparations.
2. Record experiences in journal.
3. Upon return to the classroom, discuss what you saw and share journals.

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Title: RESEARCH IN COMPARATIVE TRADITIONS

Introduction:

Students research and write about Halloween, All Souls and All Saints, Chinese death traditions, etc. After writing about them individually, the whole class can have a group discussion comparing and contrasting these traditions.

Objectives:

To sharpen research skills

To provide a writing activity

To gain an understanding of cross-cultural traditions

Time: One to two class periods

Materials: Books
Writing materials

Procedure:

1. Students visit library and use card catalogue for research.
2. Students research comparative traditions and write report on their findings.
3. Arrange group discussion and sharing of research.

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Title: SAYINGS ABOUT DEATH

Introduction:

Students read many different sayings about death in Mexico (when appropriate this can be done in Spanish as well as English) and then write some of their own. This activity summarizes the Mexican attitude toward death. It is hoped that by the time the students complete this activity, they will have a better understanding of this different way of viewing death.

Objectives:

To summarize the Mexican attitude toward death

To create sayings to reflect knowledge of the above

Time: One class session

Materials: Handout #20, "Mexican Sayings about Death"
Pencil and paper

Procedure:

1. Distribute Handout #20.
2. Read sayings aloud and discuss.
3. Have students write their own sayings and discuss.

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Title: MAKING AN ANIMATED FILM OR FILMSTRIP

Introduction:

Students draw or paint their impressions of Days of the Dead and write a narration for a film or filmstrip.

Objectives:

To create a sequenced story

To learn how to animate a film or how to make a filmstrip

To synthesize knowledge of the Days of the Dead festival

Time: Two to three class periods

Materials:
Felt pens
Paints
Clear Filmstrip or 8mm film and camera
Filmstrip or 8mm projector
Tape recorder
Music

Procedure:

1. Research animated filmmaking techniques.
2. Have students plan film working individually or in small groups.
3. Students draw out filmstrips frame by frame, or photograph using 8mm camera.
4. Students write dialogue and add sound effects or music if desired.

Further Suggestions:

Students can plan a film showing for other classes.

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Title: WRITING STORIES

Introduction:

In this activity, students use their creative writing skills to write stories about their impressions of Days of the Dead. This might be an individual or cooperative project.

Objectives:

To sharpen writing skills

To summarize newly gained knowledge of Days of the Dead

To use creative writing skills

Time: One to two class periods and/or homework

Materials: Paper
Pencils or pens

Procedure:

1. Discuss project with students, reviewing some of what they have learned and encouraging student discussion.
2. Students write stories.
3. Share stories with class.

Further Suggestions:

1. Have students convert story to play.
2. Produce play, making costumes and scenery.

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Title: ART EXHIBIT

Introduction:

In this activity, students create their impression of Days of the Dead in various media and then prepare a school site exhibit to share with other classes and parents.

Objectives:

To use creativity and imagination

To summarize newly gained knowledge of Days of the Dead

To learn exhibiting skills

Time: Two to three class periods

Materials: Paper
Paint
Crayons and markers
Collage materials

Procedure:

1. Discuss project with students giving them the choice to work in the medium they prefer.
2. Students create art works.
3. Discuss the work and summarize students' ideas about Days of the Dead.
4. Students set up the exhibit with your guidance.

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HANDOUTS

A CHECKLIST OF FEARS

HANDOUT #1

Father
Sharp objects
Dead people
Suffocating
Failing a test
Being a passenger in an airplane
Worms
Arguing with parents
Rats and mice
Life after death
Hypodermic needles
Roller coasters
Death
Crowded places
Blood
Heights
Being a leader
Swimming alone
Illness
Police
Illness or injury to loved ones
Driving a car
People in authority
Mental illness
Enclosed places
Teachers
Spiders
Thunderstorms
God
Snakes
Cemeteries
Death of a loved one
Dark places
Strange dogs
Deep water
Being with a member of the opposite sex
Untimely or early death
Losing a job
Doctors
Being in a strange place
Noise of vacuum cleaners
Loud voices
Crossing streets
Dentists
Entering a room where people are already seated
Imaginary creatures
Dying in a car accident
Funerals
Large open spaces
Fire
Parting from friends
Getting pregnant
Moving to a new home
Open wounds
Being alone
Speaking in public
People who seem insane
Falling
Being teased
Sirens
Failure
Strangers
Bats
Riding in a train
Riding in a bus
Flying insects
Shots
Sudden noises
Dull weather
Cats
Bully
Tough-looking people
Birds
Being watched working
Dead animals
Guns
Dirt
Crawling insects
Sight of fighting
Ugly people
Being criticized
Being in an elevator
Sick people
Strange shapes
Witnessing surgical operations
Feeling rejected by others
Medical odors
Feeling disapproved of
Being ignored
Mother
Lightning
Losing control
Traveling alone
Traveling through tunnels and traveling over bridges

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A QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT DEATH

1. How is death talked about in your family?

   a. I never recall any discussion.
   b. As if it were a subject not to be discussed.
   c. Only when necessary, and then with an attempt to exclude the children.
   d. Only whenever the topic comes up.
   e. Discussed as something to avoid.

2. Are the customs of Americans toward death greatly different from those of Europeans, Africans, or Asians?

   a. Probably quite a bit different.
   b. Yes, but only in minor ways.
   c. No, they are probably the same.
   d. I don't know.

3. To what extent do you believe in a life after death?

   a. I strongly believe in it.
   b. I tend to believe in it.
   c. Uncertain.
   d. Convinced it does not exist.

4. What does death mean to you?

   a. The end; final process of life.
   b. The beginning of a life after death; a transition, a new beginning.
   c. A joining of the spirit with a universal cosmic consciousness.
   d. A kind of endless sleep; rest and peace.
   e. Termination of this life but with survival of the spirit.
   f. Don't know.
   g. Other (specify) _____

5. What aspect of death is the most distasteful to you?

   a. No longer having any experiences.
   b. Fear of what might happen to the body after death.
   c. Uncertainty as to what might happen if there is a life after death.
   d. The grief it would cause relatives and friends.
   e. The ending of all projects and plans.
   f. The process of dying might be painful.
   g. Other (specify) _____

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6. How important do you believe mourning and grief rituals (such as wakes and funerals) are for the survivors?

   a. Extremely important.
   b. Somewhat important.
   c. Undecided or don't know.
   d. Not very important.
   e. Not important at all.

7. If it were entirely up to you, how would you like to have your body disposed of after you died?

   a. Burial.
   b. Cremation.
   c. Donation to medical school or science.
   d. I am indifferent.

8. What kind of funeral would you prefer?

   a. Formal, as large as possible.
   b. Small, relatives and close friends.
   c. Whatever my survivors want.
   d. None.
   e. Don't care.

9. How do you feel about having people "lie in state" in an open casket at the funeral?

   a. Approve.
   b. Don't care one way or the other.
   c. Disapprove.
   d. Strongly disapprove.
   e. Depends on circumstances.

10. What are your thoughts about funerals?

   a. Feel they are very important for the survivors.
   b. Tend to feel they are valuable.
   c. I am uncertain or undecided.
   d. Definitely do not believe in them.

Adapted from a questionnaire in Psychology Today.

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OBITUARIES FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

Mexico

(Announcement from the family)

"Mr. ANGEL SANCHEZ CORDERO died yesterday at 4:30 p.m., in the bosom of our Mother, The Most Holy Apostolic Roman Catholic Church, comforted by the last rites, and having received a blessing from the Pope.

His wife, children, sons and daughters-in-law, grandchildren, brothers and sisters, and other relatives, announce this to you, with profound grief, asking that you pray to God our Lord, for the eternal rest of his soul.

Mexico City, January 9, 1981

Mourning will be held in Gayosso Funeral Service, from whence the funeral cortege will leave today at 11:10 a.m. to go to the Spanish Cemetary."

EL SEÑOR

ANGEL SANCHEZ CORDERO

Falleció ayer a las 16:30 horas en el seno de nuestra Madre, La Santa Iglesia Católica, Apostólica Romana, confortado con todos los auxilios espirituales y la bendición papal.

Su esposa, hijos, hijos políticos, nietos, hermanos y demás familiares, lo participan a usted con profundo pesar, suplicándole ruegue a Dios nuestro Señor por el eterno descanso de su alma.

México, D. F., 9 de enero de 1981

El duelo se recibe en la Agencia Gayosso Félix Cuevas, de donde partirá el cortejo hoy a las 11:10 horas al Panteón Español.

AGENCIA EUSEBIO GAYOSSO
FELIX CUEVAS Y GABRIEL MANCERA

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(Announcement from a company)

"Business Executives, Inc., announced with deep regrets the sad passing of MR. ANGEL SANCHEZ CORDERO, father of our associate, Angel Sanchez Huerta, yesterday in this city.

Mourning will be at Gayosso Funeral Service on Felix Cuevas St., and the funeral procession will leave from there today at 11:10 a.m. for the Spanish Cemetary.

Mexico City, January 9, 1981"

EJECUTIVOS DE EMPRESAS, A. C.
participa con profunda pena el sensible fallecimiento del señor
ANGEL SANCHEZ CORDERO
padre de nuestro asociado el señor Angel Sánchez Huerta,
acaecido el día de ayer en esta ciudad.
El duelo se recibe en la Agencia Gayosso de Félix Cuevas,
de donde partirá el cortejo el día de hoy, a las 11:10 horas,
al Panteón Español.
México, D. F., 9 de enero de 1981
AGENCIA EUSEBIO GAYOSSO/FELIX CUEVAS
Y GABRIEL MANCERA

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In Mexico, paid ads are printed by the family, and also by the company where they worked, or in some cases, such as the above, by the company where the deceased person's children or spouse worked. In the case of a very important or wealthy person, there may be a whole page of ads printed from various agencies, families, and organizations, expressing sorrow to the family of the deceased.

After the funeral, the family of the deceased person sends out small announcements on black-bordered stationary, announcing the schedule of masses which have been requested (and a donation given to the church) in memory of the family member. The schedule is usually one per week for the first month, then once a month for the next year. The family invites acquaintances to attend at least one of these masses, and to make a small contribution to the church in the name of the deceased.

Funeral agencies for the middle and lower classes often have display windows with coffins in plain view from the street, while the upper class agencies are more discreet and hidden.

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OBITUARIES FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

Switzerland

8032 Zurich
October 21, 1980
Hohenbuhl St. #2

"With a heavy heart, we bid farewell to my dearly beloved husband, our dear father, brother, brother-in-law, uncle and godfather, Edwin Georg Neurauter. He, in his 69th year, after a short say in the hospital, has left us forever. We will miss him very deeply. He leaves behind a great void.

In quiet sorrow:

Hedy Neurater-Kocherhaus
Brigitte Neurauter
Edi Neurauter
Relatives and Friends

Burial will take place in the small family plot. Services: Monday, October 27, 1980, at 2:30 p.m. in the Waterchurch of Zurich. Please send all flowers to the Waterchurch of Zurich."

Note: Below this obituary is a notice of remembrance for the same man from a club or guild he belonged to. To the upper left is one from his employees at the Red Lattice Restaurant which he owned. Below that, is also an announcement that the restaurant will be closed on 10/27/80 because of his death.

8032 Zürich, den 21. Oktober 1980
Hohenbuhlstr. 2

TODESANZEIGE

Mit schwerem Herzen nehmen wir Abschied von meinem innigeliebten Gatten, unserem liebsten Papi, Bruder, Schwager, Onkel und Gotti

Edwin Georg Neurauter

Er hat uns nach kurzem Spitalaufenthalt im 69. Lebensjahr für immer verlassen. Wir werden ihn sehr vermissen. Er hinterlässt eine grosse Lücke.

In stiller Trauer:
Hedy Neurauter-Kocherhans
Brigitte Neurauter
Edi Neurauter
Verwandte und Freunde

Die Urnenbeisetzung findet im engsten Familienkreis statt.
Abdankung: Montag, 27. Oktober 1980, um 14.30 Uhr in der Wasserkirche Zürich.
Allfällige Blumen bitte in der Wasserkirche Zürich abgeben.

DTXXXXXXXX

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DEATH IN LIN LING

When a man reaches the age of fifty, he begins to prepare his coffin. He selects the wood, the finest he can afford. This is done sometimes many years before, but around age fifty, he will probably ask the local carpenter to build a coffin, which is then stored in the storeroom of the person's own cave.

If a man dies before the age of sixty, it is an unhappy death; but if he dies after the age of sixty, he dies happily.

When an old person dies, his or her sons put on white mourning clothes and go and inform all the relatives. The entire family then discusses where and when the dead person is to be buried. In some parts of China it may be several months before the coffin is buried. In making a decision about burial, the family, especially if there are many members of the older generation, will call a "knowledgable" person to decide where the burial should be, using the old traditional methods in an attempt to bring good luck. The young people do not bother about this "knowledgable" person so much, but the older generation still think it matters a lot how they are buried.

When a date is set, invitations are sent out to all the relatives, who in return send gifts of food and money. The relatives and friends come from long distances to participate in the mournful ceremonies.

On the first day of the funeral there are three meals. After eating two meals they all weep until the evening, when, at six o'clock, they have more buckwheat noodles, these being considered lucky with meat, gravy, and pickles. After that they weep and talk about the dead man. Then they all go to bed.

Early the next morning the corpse is taken to the grave, the coffin being carried by four good friends. The oldest son heads the procession, holding the dead man's name plaque or plate in front of him; then comes the coffin and then the members of the family in order of generations. They have with them wine and steam bread for the dead person. Everyone weeps as the dead man is being buried. After placing tombstones on the mound of the grave, paper money is burned and offerings of wine, steam bread, and meat are left for the dead person. On the third day after the funeral, the younger members of the family go to the grave and make similar offerings, weep a lot and then go home. This is done again in 100 days. After that offerings are made once a year. Everyone, both Communists and those not in the party, go to the graves of their ancestors and make offerings. Each family has its own burial ground.

Children under twelve may not be buried in their family's burial ground. The older people say that children under twelve do not have fully-developed souls, so they are buried without ceremoney upon the hillside where they cannot bring bad luck. Children under seven are buried without coffins.

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To die without anyone to continue the family is the most dreadful thing that can happen to anyone.

Adapted from Report from a Chinese Village, by Jan Myrdal (Random House Vintage Books, 1965).

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MEXICAN DEATH PRACTICES

Handout #5

Annually Mexicans, especially the poor, celebrate the Day of the Dead or All Souls Day, as it is often referred to. Central to this celebration is the folk belief that the souls of the dead--first the children, then the adults--return to their families on November 1 and 2; the children on the first and the adults on the second. The richer people are, the more likely they will follow more traditional Catholic beliefs. On this day many different offerings are made to the returning souls. The most common offerings are a candle to light the soul's way and water to quench the soul's thirst. In addition, food and flowers may be offered to honor the dead soul.

When someone dies, there is often much weeping, both by men and women. A close relative, usually a man, will make funeral arrangements as soon as possible. The family may use the services of a funeral home if they can afford it, otherwise the burial is done by the family. Before burial can occur, a death certificate must be obtained. This is the law in Mexico.

A wake is held at night to allow family and friends to express their grief and sorrow over the death. The dead person is discussed and there are often long periods of crying and solemn mourning. The casket is at the wake and a cross will sometimes be made of powdered lime so that the soul of the dead person can rest eternally. A collection is taken at the wake to help pay for the funeral.

It is hoped that before one dies, he or she will be administered the last rites, one of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church. But this is not always possible.

The funeral service will be held in a church if possible. The service is held the day after the wake, which may last most of the night. After the service, the casket is taken to the cemetery to be buried. At the grave the relatives will lower the casket into the ground and throw dirt over the casket. Flowers and candles are left at the grave site.

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INDIA: HINDU FUNERAL CUSTOMS

HANDOUT #6

At the waterfront of the town of Banaras everyone is aware of death. Each year about 30,000 dead bodies are cremated on the shores of the sacred Ganges River. To die in Banaras is a lifetime desire of all people of the Hindu faith, because it means that the soul of the person will be freed forever from the wheel of life, the constant cycle of birth and rebirth.

After a death, male relatives and friends bring the corpse, which is draped or covered with red, to the banks of the Ganges. The dead body is then immersed in the river and then set on the steps to dry. The bodies are then placed on cordwood pyres (wood platforms), together with sacred offerings of sandalwood, camphor, mango leaves, and ghee (a clarified butter which helps to fuel the fire). After walking around the pyre five times, the chief mourner, who is usually the eldest son, grasps a straw torch and sets the body afire. While burning the chief mourner will check to see if the fire has broken the skull. If not, the chief mourner will strike the skull five times; breaking it frees the soul from the body. The fire is kept going until only ashes remain.

Mourning does not take place during the cremation. The next day, the chief mourner will often bring milk to pour over the pyre. Later the family will return to scatter bones and ashes in the river.

During the cremation ceremony, members of a sub-caste serve as cremation attendants. It is their job to watch the burning pyres, or ghats, night and day. For their work these men receive a fee, from 5 to 10 rupees, depending on the family's wealth.

Small children are not burned. Children are considered innocent and do not need the effects and benefits of the purifying flames. In their case, the bodies are taken to the middle of the Ganges river, where the remains are tied to stones and cast into the river.

Along the river, the people will set out lamps in bamboo baskets high upon bamboo poles to guide the souls of the dead that have been released through the customs of burial.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

HANDOUT #7

1. Where are funeral services usually held?
2. Who comes to the funeral?
3. How far do people travel to attend the funeral?
4. What practices are required by law?
5. What methods are used to transport the remains of the dead person?
6. In what cases or circumstances are special customs or practices followed?
7. Who is in charge of the funeral ceremonies?
8. How do people in the community show concern for the family of the dead person?
9. In what ways do the survivors show their grief or sense of loss?
10. How is the death publicized?
11. How is the body disposed of?
12. How are decisions made about place and time of burial?
13. What do the survivors do to convince themselves that the person is really dead?
14. What practices indicate to you that the people believe in a life after death?
15. What do the people believe happens to the person after death?
16. What customs seem to be particular to this country or region?
17. What things are done to the body of the dead person?

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CHART

HANDOUT #3

No. of question	INDIA	CHINA	MEXICO

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GENERALIZED STATEMENTS

HANDOUT #9

1. Funeral customs are very complicated.
2. Most funeral practices have a special meaning that everyone in the community can understand.
3. Cultural practices related to death vary from society to society.
4. The age of death and causes of death will help determine the method of disposal.
5. Cultural death practices depend on the needs of the survivors.
6. Death practices help people deal with their own fears about their own death.
7. Death customs help the survivors accept the death.
8. Many special occupations are created by death practices.
9. Funerals are very important.
10. Religion plays an important part in funeral customs.
11. Many practices serve to help the survivors express their grief, loss, and sadness.
12. Funeral customs will differ depending on who the dead person is.
13. There are many ways people use to dispose of the body.
14. The customs for burial reflect what the people consider important in life.
15. Burial customs are in part determined by where people live.
16. Most funeral practices are subject to very specific regulations.
17. Most people believe in some form of life after death.
18. Funeral practices are mainly for the benefit of those who survive.
19. People around the world believe there is a proper way to dispose of a dead person.

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KAMIKAZE LETTERS

Dearest Parents:

Please excuse my dictating these last words to my friend. There is no longer time for me to write more to you.

There is nothing special that I can say, but I want you to know that I am in the best of health at this moment. It is my great honor to have been selected for this duty. The first planes of my group are already in the air. These words are being written by my friend as he rests the paper on the fuselage of my plane. There are no feelings of remorse or sadness here. My outlook is unchanged. I will perform my duty calmly.

Words cannot express my gratitude to you. It is my hope that this last act of striking a blow at the enemy will serve to repay in small measure the wonderful things you have done for me.

My last wish is that my brothers may have proper education. It is certain that uneducated men have an empty life. Please see to it that their lives are as full as possible. I know that my sister is well taken care of because you have provided for her as you did for me. I am grateful for a wonderful father and mother.

I shall be satisfied if my final effort serves as recompense for the heritage our ancestors bequeathed.

farewell ! Jun

22 February 1945

I am actually a member at last of the Kamikaze Special Attack Corps.

My life will be rounded in the next thirty days. My chance will come! Death and I are waiting. The training and practice have been rigorous, but it is worthwhile if we can die beautifully and for a cause.

I shall die watching the pathetic struggle of our nation. My life will gallop in the next few weeks as my youth and life draw to a close....

The sortie has been scheduled for the next ten days.

I am a human being and hope to be neither saint nor scoundrel, hero nor fool--just a human being. As one who has spent his life in wishful longing and searching, I die resignedly in the hope that my life will serve as a "human document."

The world in which I live was too full of discord. As a community of rational human beings it should be better composed. Lacking a single great conductor, everyone lets loose with his own sound, creating dissonance where there should be melody and harmony.

We shall serve the nation gladly in its present painful struggle. We shall plunge into enemy ships cherishing the conviction that Japan has been and will be a place where only lovely homes, brave women, and beautiful friendships are allowed to exist.

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What is the duty today? It is to fight.
What is the duty tomorrow? It is to win.
What is the daily duty? It is to die.

If by some strange chance, Japan should suddenly win this war it would be a fatal misfortune for the future of the nation. It will be better for our nation and people if they are tempered through real ordeals which will serve to strengthen.

Like cherry blossoms
In the spring,
Let us fall
Clean and radiant.

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A EULOGY FOR HUMANKIND

HANDOUT #11

It is the year 1994. The problems humankind faced in the 1970s have grown worse. Mass starvation is part of a horrible existence of three-quarters of the world's population. Energy sources such as oil and gas are almost gone. People have changed. Disease has changed them. Hope has gone from most people. Nuclear confrontation has occurred a number of times in the Middle East. The fate of humankind is questionable; in fact, humans as you once knew them are for all purposes dead. You are to write a eulogy for humankind and what people could have been had things been done differently in the 1970s.

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MIKE MANSFIELD:
Eulogy for John F. Kennedy

Few Americans who lived through it will ever forget that long weekend at the end of November 1963--from Friday, November 22, when the young, handsome vigorous President was shot down in the streets of Dallas, to Monday, November 25, when his coffin was lowered into the grave on the hillside of Arlington Cemetery, overlooking the capitol of the United States. Everyone has his special memory--for example, of the place where he was, and of the activity in which he was engaged, when he first heard the terrible news--but some memories are shared by millions. One of these is the somber ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda on Sunday afternoon. The President's body lay in state; the widow and her two charming children stood together to one side; and the Senate Majority Leader, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and the Speaker of the House paid homage in short, moving eulogies to their departed leader. Chief Justice Warren and Speaker McCormack spoke well and memorably, but Senator Mansfield's address, reprinted here, had a special and rather surprising eloquence, coming as it did from a man not widely known for poetry of language. It was later learned that Mrs. Kennedy had not in fact placed her wedding ring in her dead husband's hand, as Mansfield supposed at the time.

> There was a sound of laughter; in a moment, it was no more. And so she took a ring from her finger and placed it in his hands.
>
> There was a wit in a man neither young nor old, but a wit full of an old man's wisdom and of a child's wisdom, and then, in a moment it was no more. And so she took a ring from her finger and placed it in his hands.
>
> There was a man marked with the scars of his love of country, a body active with the surge of a life far, far from spent and, in a moment, it was no more. And so she took a ring from her finger and placed it in his hands.
>
> There was a father with a little boy, a little girl, and a joy of each in the other. In a moment it was no more, and so she took a ring from her finger and placed it in his hands.
>
> There was a husband who asked much and gave much, and out of the giving and the asking wove with a woman what could not be broken in life, and in a moment it was no more. And so she took a ring from her finger and placed it in his hands, and kissed him and closed the lid of a coffin.
>
> A piece of each of us died at that moment. Yet, in death he gave of himself to us. He gave us of a good heart from which the laughter came. He gave us of a profound wit, from which a great leadership emerged. He gave us of a kindness and a strength fused into a human courage to seek peace without fear.

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He gave us of his love that we, too, in turn, might give. He gave that we might give of ourselves, that we might give to one another until there would be no room, no room at all, for the bigotry, the hatred, prejudice, and the arrogance which converged in that moment of horror to strike him down.

In leaving us--these gifts, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, President of the United States, leaves with us. Will we take them now, Mr. Presient? Will we have the sense and the responsibility and the courage to take them?

Record, 88 Congress, 1 Session, page 21592.

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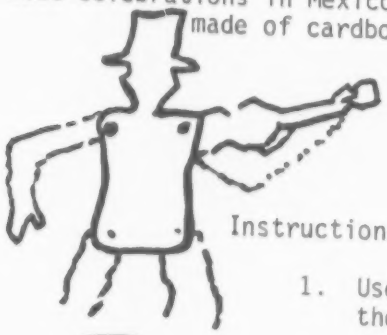
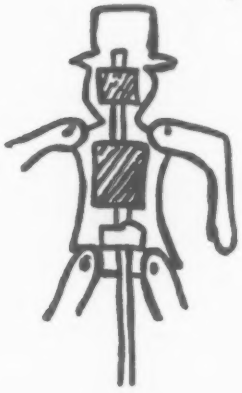
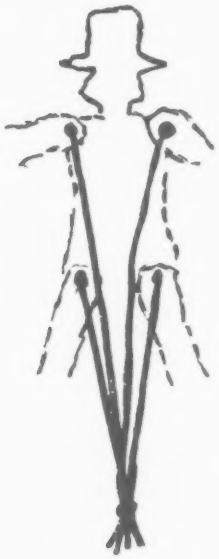
INSTRUCTIONS

HANDOUT #13

This type of string puppet is a popular toy made during the Days of the Dead celebrations in Mexico. Some are hand carved or wood, but many are made of cardboard.







Instructions:

1. Use the pattern and cut out the parts from posterboard.
2. Attach the arms and legs with brads through designated holes.
3. Glue 17" dowel down the center of the back of the puppet.
4. Cut two 13" pieces and two 10" pieces of twine.
5. Puncture a very small hole (on the dot) at the top of each arm and leg.
6. Thread and tie the longer pieces of twine through the arm holes and the shorter ones through the holes of the legs.
7. With the arms and legs in a parallel position with the body, tie all four strings together three inches from their ends, keeping an even tension on all of them.
8. Pull the strings, and legs and arms jump. (Note: If the arms or legs don't rotate, loosen the brads a little to allow the parts to move freely.)
9. For this pattern, you may staple the left arm and guitar to the body, but do not attach a string or brad to the left shoulder.

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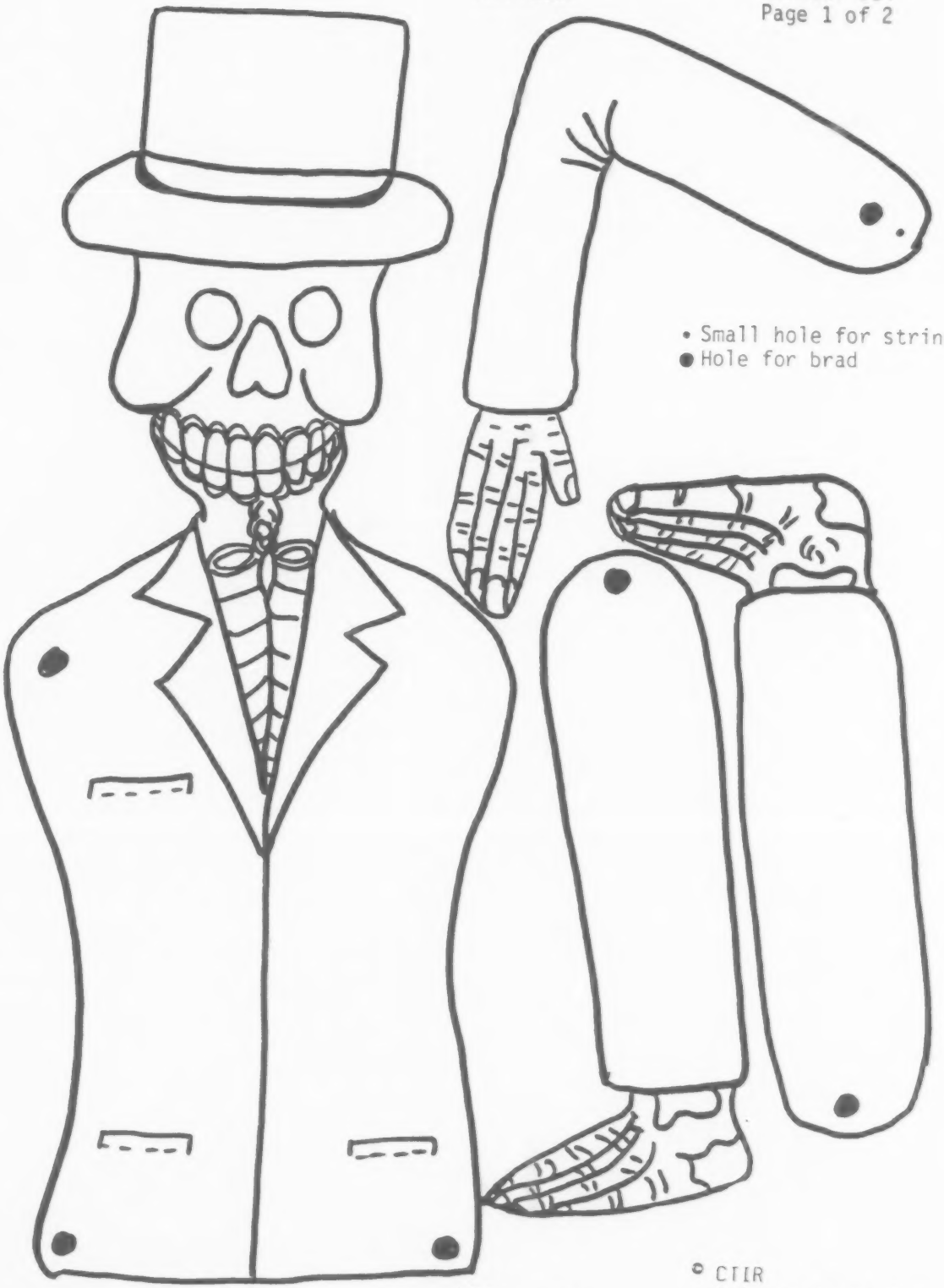
PATTERN



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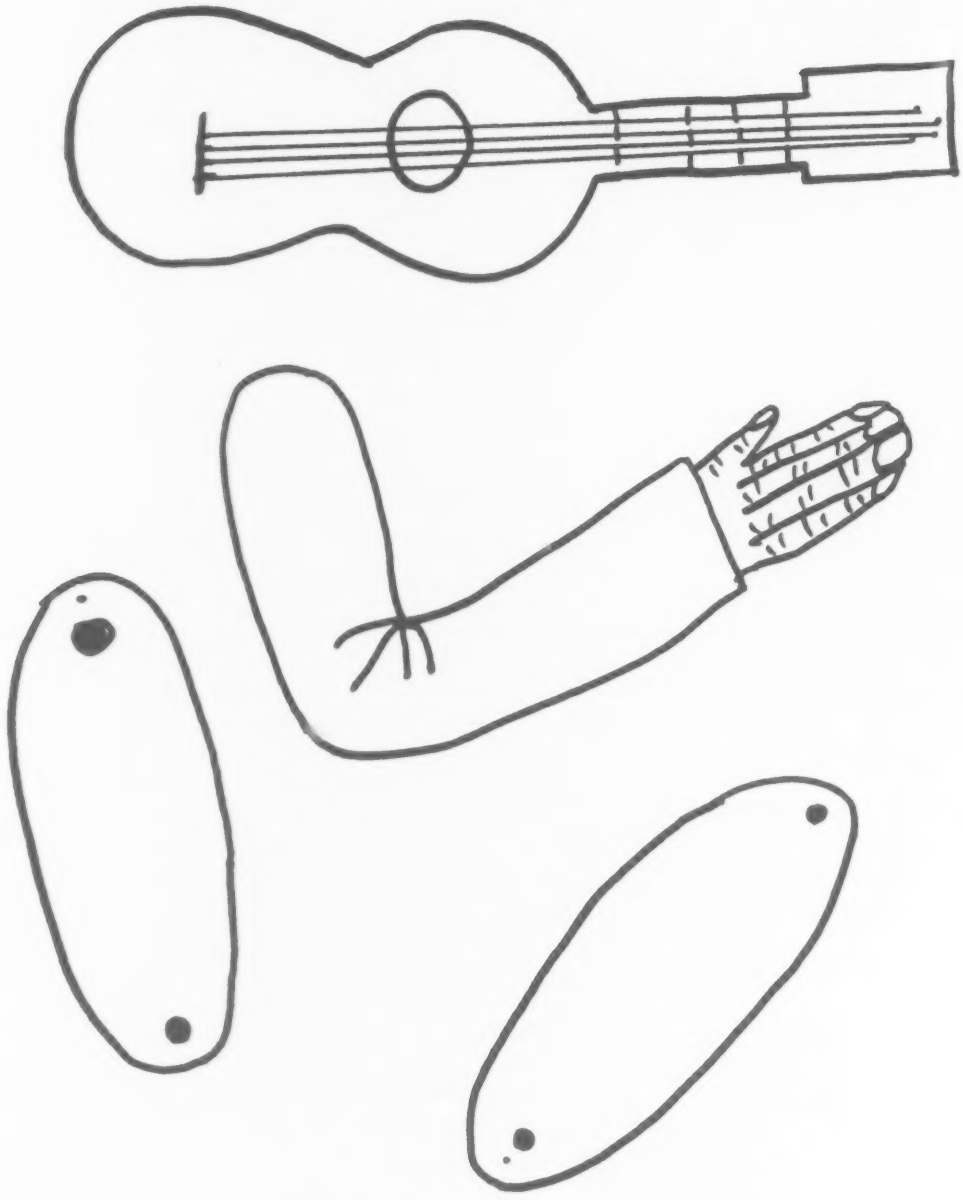

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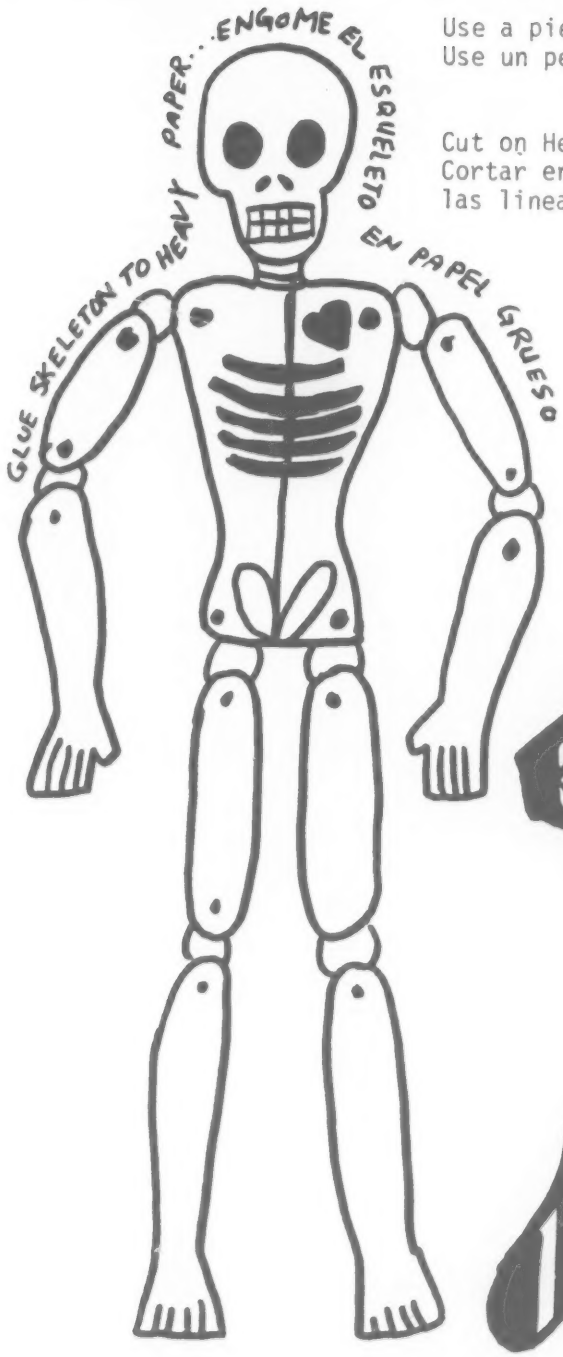
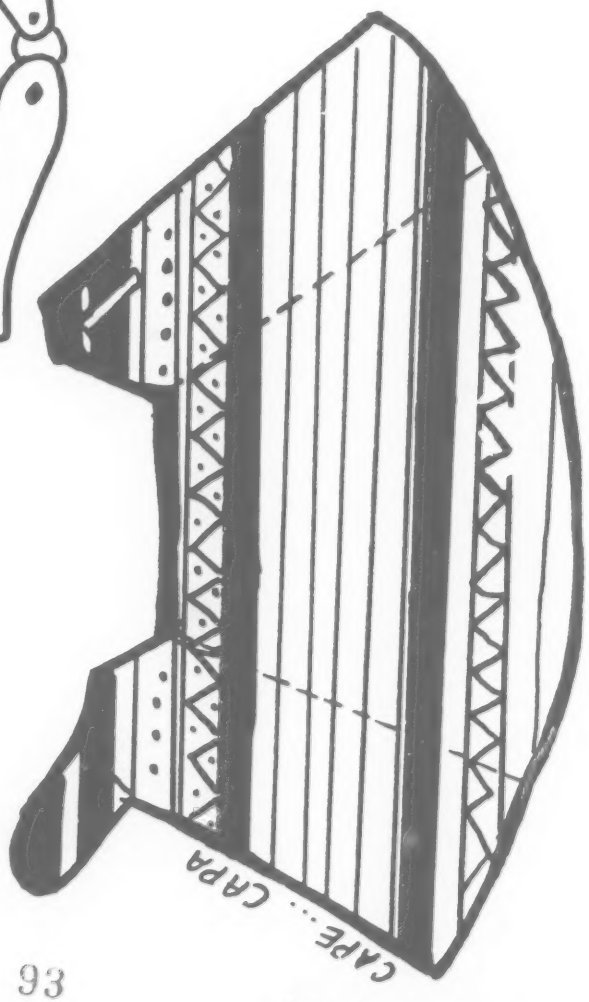
PATTERN

Use a piece of cotton for hair
Use un pedazo de algodón para el pelo

Cut on Heavy lines...Fold on dotted lines
Cortar en las lineas gruesas...doblar en las lineas marcadas





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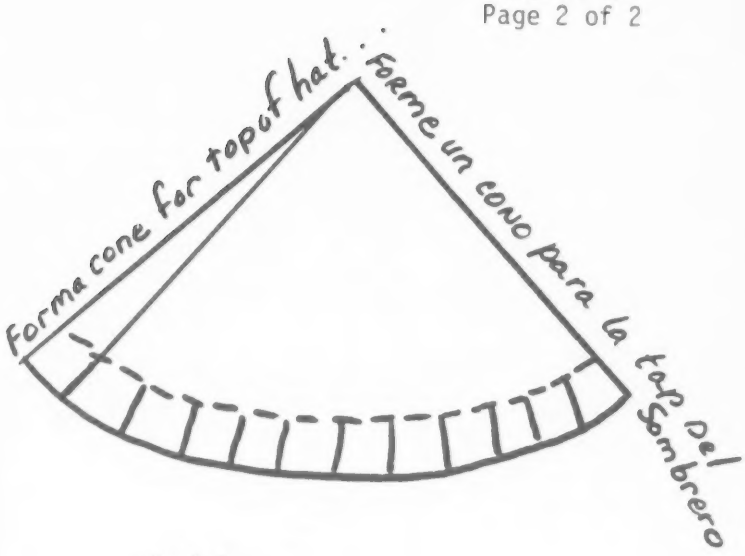

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CHOCOLATE

HANDOUT #16

A Children's Rhyme in Spanish

Uno, dos, tres -- cho!

Uno, dos, tres -- co!

Uno, dos, tres -- la!

Uno, dos, tres -- te!

cho-co-la-te, cho-co-la-te

Ba-te, ba-te el cho-co-la-te

Translation:

One, two, three --cho!

One, two, three -- co!

One, two, three -- la!

One, two, three -- te!

Cho-co-la-te, cho-co-la-te

Beat, beat the chocolate

Note: In Mexico chocolate is sold in cakes mixed with cinnamon and sugar. The cakes are broken up in a clay jar filled with hot milk and then beaten briskly with a molinillo.

chocolate mug

Molinillo

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BREAD OF THE DEAD RECIPE

Ingredients:

Bread

2 C (cups) milk
½ C water
½ C (one stick) margarine
5-6 C flour
½ C sugar
1 t (teaspoon) salt
1 T (tablespoon) anise seed
2 packages dry yeast
4 eggs

Glaze

1/3 C orange juice
2 T grated orange peel
½ C sugar

Directions:

1. In a large bowl, thoroughly mix 1½ C flour, ½ C sugar, 1 t salt, 1 T anise seed, and 2 packages of undissolved active dry yeast.

2. Combine ½ C milk, ½ C water, and ½ C margarine in a saucepan. Heat over low heat until liquids are very warm (120 to 130 degrees). Margarine does not need to melt. Gradually add to above dry ingredients and beat 2 minutes at medium speed of electric mixer, scraping bowl occasionally.

3. Add 4 eggs at room temperature and 1 C flour. Beat at high speed 2 minutes. Stir in enough additional flour to make a stiff dough, 3-4 cups.

4. Turn onto lightly floured board; knead until smooth and elastic, about 8-10 minutes.

5. Place in greased bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in warm place, free from draft, until doubled in bulk, about 1½ hours.

6. Punch dough down. Cut off 1 piece of dough about 3½ inches in diameter. Set aside.

7. Form large piece of dough into a smooth round ball. Place on a greased baking sheet. Flatten to an 8-inch round.

8. Pinch off 4 small pieces from remaining dough, each about 1 inch in diameter. Divide the remaining piece of dough into 3 equal pieces. Roll each piece into a 25-inch rope. Braid ropes together. Form a circle and seal ends.

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9. Make an indentation with fingertips around large round of dough, about 1 inch from edge. Carefully place braid over indentation. Secure with toothpicks.

10. Roll 4, 1-inch balls of dough into 3-inch ropes. Pinch and curve to form birds in flight. Place on top of loaf.

11. Cover and let rise in warm place, free from draft, until doubled in bulk, about 1 hour.

12. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes, or until done. Brush with orange glaze (recipe follows) and dust with colored sprinkles or granulated sugar. Remove from baking sheet and cool on wire rack. Eat warm, if possible.

Orange Glaze:

1. Combine ½ C sugar, 1/3 C orange juice, and 2 T grated orange peel in a small saucepan.

2. Bring to a boil and simmer 2 minutes.

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BREAD THAT LIFTS THE SPIRIT

HANDOUT #18

Day of the Dead Bread

(FROM AN ARTICLE IN THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE)

In Mexico, mid-October through November second is a period of homage to departed loved ones. Food offerings on altars and tables during this festival period resemble many of the symbols of Halloween: skulls, cross bones, skeletons, and fanciful creations suggesting ascension to heaven.

Pan de Muertos, "bread of the dead," dominates the festival displays. Its shape suggests a ladder to ease the spirits' ascension. Atop the loaf, a flock of birds, sculptured from the bread dough, herald the arrival of spirits. (The bread can have many designs depending on the region in Mexico.)

Pan de Muertos is a light, sweet bread flavored with anise, orange peel and orange glaze. In Mexico, the bread is displayed with marigolds, fruits and other tidbits, then eaten accompanied by pulque, an alcoholic beverage made from cactus. Coffee and hot chocolate are also accompaniments.

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INSTRUCTIONS
GUATEMALA'S FLYING MESSENGERS

Handout #19

Materials: 4 dowels, each 36 inches long
8 pieces of colored tissue paper, 30x20 inches
rubber cement
string
white glue
knife
compass
scissors
posterboard
pencil
yardstick

1. Notch sticks in middle. Glue together, making two sets. Let dry.
2. Glue two sets together to form 8-point circle. Tie with string in center. Let dry.
3. From posterboard, make the following patterns with compass:
   a. semicircle with 15-inch radius
   b. three circles with radii of 4, 7, and 10 inches
4. With white tissue, cut two semicircles. With another color, cut two more semicircles. Glue halves together with rubber cement, forming a narrow seam. Then glue one circle on top of the other.
5. With other colors, cut one circle of each of the other sizes.
6. With the largest on the bottom, glue concentric circles on top of each other.
7. With scraps or other colors, cut out geometric and floral designs to be glued onto the kite.
8. To make fringe: divide one piece of tissue into 4 strips, 5x30 inches each. Fold in half, lengthwise, twice. Fringe, leaving one inch at the top.
9. Glue paper circles to sticks with white glue.
10. Glue fringe to edges of kite with rubber cement.

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MEXICAN SAYINGS ABOUT DEATH

Handout #20

Como me ves, te veras
si no cooperas conmigo
pronto a mi lado estaras.

As you see me, you will see yourself
if you don't cooperate with me
you will quickly be by my side.

(Public Altar, Mixquic, Mexico, 1975)

Bienvenidos de los Difunto

Welcome Dead Ones

(A sign made with corn kernels, Mixquic, Mexico, 1975)

La vida es un libro abierto,
La muerte es un ataud cerrado.

Life is an open book,
Death is a closed coffin.

(Mixquic, Mexico, 1975)

There should be no tears for the dead, as they will make the road to heaven slippery and harder to get to. Rather the path should be made with flowers and good things to eat.

(Traditional saying in Mexico)

In modern Mexico, the symbols of death are not confined to ritual. They have become a vital part of popular art.

(Stanley Meisler, Los Angeles Times)

Para un occidental, la muerte es una palabra maldita que nadie se atreve a pronunciar porque quema los labios . . . el mexicano, en cambio, la frecuenta, la burla, la acaricia . . . , duerme con ella.

The word death is not pronounced in New York, in Paris, in London, because it burns the lips. The Mexican, in contrast, is familiar with death, jokes about it, caresses it, sleeps with it, celebrates it; it is one of his favorite toys and his most steadfast love.

(Octavio Paz, Mexican writer)

In Mexico City on Day of the Dead fashionable pastry shops swing over French confections this urgent sign: Buy your dead men's breads here. They turn their shining sophisticated displays into ranks and pyramids of skulls, miniature and life-size and even bigger than that, luscent white or creamy with maraschino cherries for eyes and syrupy grins on their mouths and rows of fine gold teeth. The funerals are of expensive milk chocolate, the wreaths of tiny candied fruits, and though this wonderful array is for the baby ghosts, no child in the city but awakes demanding on this day "my funeral" or at least "my skull."

(Anita Brenner, Idols Behind Altars)

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